

## THE STORY OF '98.

### The Rising in Antrim—March Upon the Town Under McCracken.

### Desperate Valor of the Insurgents—Antrim Is Captured.

### The Tide of Victory Turned Through Overconfidence of Insurgents.

### Capture and Execution of One of Ireland's Bravest Sons.

### GALLANT GEN. HOPE AND HIS BAND

From the Irish World.

The seizure of Russell and Neilson was a cruel blow to the Ulster United Irishmen. Neilson, in particular, had been the life and soul of the organization. He, better than any other man, knew its resources and capabilities, and during the events which preceded and followed the murder of Lord Edward Fitzgerald had given ample evidence of his courage and astuteness. His unexpected arrest therefore threw his followers into disorder. The rising in Ulster, as in Leinster, had been fixed to commence on May 23, but it was not until a fortnight afterward that the insurgents showed signs of activity. A meeting of their leaders was held, and it was decided that the men of Antrim and Down should assemble simultaneously in their respective counties on June 5.

Unfortunately the leader of the Down men, the Rev. Steele Dickson, was seized while on his way to the place of meeting, and this further mishap dampened to no small extent the hopes of his followers. When the men of Antrim assembled there was found to be much difference of opinion regarding their course of action. Some declared for an instant march upon Antrim. Others counseled delay and recommended that a few weeks should be spent in consolidating their forces, providing ammunition and supplies and introducing initiatory discipline into their camp. While debate was at its height news arrived that a body of soldiers was marching against them and was only a few miles off.

This was instantly decided then. They had no choice but to stand their ground or disperse—to play the part of heroes or cowards. Without a moment's hesitation it was decided to advance against the enemy. Having no recognized leader, they held an election, and the choice fell upon the heroic Henry Joy McCracken, who at once issued a manifesto to this effect:

"Army of Ulster: Tomorrow we march on Antrim. Drive the garrison of Randalstown before you, and haste to form a junction with Commander-in-chief.

"HENRY JOY MCCracken, "First Year of Liberty, June 6, 1798."

On the evening of June 6 men might be observed hurrying toward Cregarogan fort from all sides of the country. Some had muskets, others shotguns; a few were without arms, expecting to find a supply in camp; but the majority carried their trusty pikes over their right shoulders. In every eye shone the light of hope—of fierce desire to grapple with their ruthless foes and avenge the wrongs of centuries. The dawn of Liberty, too soon, alas! to suffer eclipse, bathed them in radiance:

"Oh! then tell me, Shawn O'Ferrall, Tell me why you hurry so."

"Hush, ma bouchal, hush and listen"—

And his cheeks were all aglow.

"I bear orders from the Captain—

Get you ready quick and soon,

For the pikes must be together

By the rising of the moon!"

The morning of the 7th witnessed

a glorious sight. Under the brilliant rays of the June sun three thousand men stood under arms. Considering their want of training, it was wonderful with what skill and celerity they took their places. The gunmen were put in front; next came the pikemen, and a few insignificant pieces of artillery (all they possessed) brought up the rear. When the standard of Greer was unfurled at the head of the insurgent army a mighty cheer rose from the ranks. Then the command was given, "Quick, march!" and as they broke into a swinging stride the glorious strains of the "Marseillaise" made the mountain echoes ring.

The town of Antrim is situated on the banks of the Six-Mile-Water river, on the great road from Belfast to Londonderry. At that time it consisted of two principal streets, with others branching from them. On the northern side it was protected by a sharp rise of ground, and on the southern by a strongly fortified castle. Col. Lumley, who commanded the garrison, made an able disposition of his forces. The militia were placed in guard of the castle, in front of which a regiment of regulars was drawn up. At the other end of the town the hill adjoining the cathedral was occupied by the yeomanry and the Twenty-second Regiment of Light Dragoons, while the artillery was stationed in the middle of the main street. In this order they awaited the advance of the insurgents, who were marching on Antrim in four columns by way of Belfast, Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Shone's Castle roads.

McCracken, having at last reached the gates of Antrim and reconnoitered the enemy's position, divided his men into two bodies, who were to attack each end of the town simultaneously. A few well directed shots from one of their small field pieces forced the infantry to abandon their position in front of the castle and to take refuge behind the gates. Here, being under cover, they were enabled to keep up a heavy fire on the insurgents without sustaining any damage themselves. Orders were, therefore, given to the pikemen to dislodge them. With a lusty cheer the pikemen dashed forward in the face of grape-shot; and though numbers were mowed down, they were soon at close quarters with the regulars, whose short bayonets proved of little service against the long pikes of their enemies. British skill and British pluck gave way before the resistless onslaught of the despised Croppies. A few minutes more and the soldiers were flying up the main street and scattering in all directions.

Meanwhile the northern division of the insurgents had attacked the cavalry, and after a series of desperate charges had driven them from their position. The dragoons and the yeomen, dismounting from their horses, retreated to a graveyard in the vicinity of the cathedral, and took refuge behind the tombstones. But the insurgents were not to be balked. Despite the musketry fire they clambered over the cemetery walls and piked half the royalist troops. The remainder took to advance against the enemy. Having no recognized leader, they held an election, and the choice fell upon the heroic Henry Joy McCracken, who at once issued a manifesto to this effect:

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the Randalstown district who had not been able to reach the camp at Cregarogan in time, and who were now hurrying up to the relief of their comrades in Antrim. Knowing nothing of what had taken place they naturally mistook the flight of the redcoats for a charge. They did not stop to reflect that fear lends fleetness and more powerful wings than courage. That troop of desperate looking men and maddened horses plunging forward with reckless speed must surely be bent on a hostile mission. They paused a moment; a panic seized them, as might have happened in the case of seasoned troops, and the next moment they were dispersing in every direction.

The panic which had seized the Randalstown men aroused the military from theirs. They suddenly came to a halt, and to their great astonishment perceived that they were not pursued, a fact which need not have aroused any surprise, seeing that the insur-

gents thought all danger had passed the military entered the southern gate. Cries of alarm were raised but it was too late. Instead of finding a serried body of insurgents confronting them, the military found only a disorganized mob. McCracken endeavored to rally his men, but they had dispersed in every conceivable direction, and the majority knew not where they had left their weapons. The dragoons, with their long sabres, and the yeoman, with their heavy cavalry pistols, had but to deal with a mass of unarmed men. To this organization there was one noble exception. Gen. Hope, who commanded one of the divisions of the insurgent army, gathered around him a gallant little band—McCracken afterwards designated it "the Spartan Band"—which for a long time kept the whole force of British at bay. Attacked on every side by yeomanry, militia, cavalry and infantry, they held their ground in the face of over-

confidence and carelessness. Upward of eight hundred insurgents had fallen but they did not die unavenged. At least one-third of their opponents had reddened the streets of Antrim with their blood, and, above all, Lord O'Neill—the recreant heir to a noble name, who had led the cowardly yeoman on many a bloody raid—now lay with a pike driven right through his body. McCracken or Hope did not yet despair. Though a British force under Col. Clavering, four hundred strong, lay a short distance from Duneag Hill, the insurgent leaders determined to keep their little band together as the nucleus of the insurgent army in hopes that an opportunity for striking another blow would quickly come.

Col. Clavering, being afraid to attack the gallant little band, endeavored to effect their dispersal by subterfuge. He tendered complete amnesty to all of them except four of their leaders, including Hope and McCracken, for whose capture he offered a reward of \$2,000 a head. The insurgents, who would rather die than betray their leaders, indignantly retorted by offering a similar reward for his own head. Thereupon the noble Britisher threatened that if they did not disperse he would burn and raze to the ground every cottage in the surrounding country. Fear for his personal safety did not weigh with the intrepid McCracken, but pity for his helpless and inoffensive friends shook his resolution. With tears in his eyes he bade his followers disperse; and then, accompanied by seven faithful friends, he took refuge in a cave in the neighboring mountains.

For a long time he eluded the bloodhounds who were day and night upon his track. Nothing but his own skill and courage and the absolute incorruptibility of the peasantry saved him from capture. At last he assumed the disguise of a carpenter and made his way toward the sea coast with the intention of sailing to France. After many adventures he reached a little village in the neighborhood of Carrickfergus. He was in hopes that now at any rate his troubles were over and that he would soon tread the free soil of La Belle France. But it was not to be. One day while passing through the village he was recognized by one of a squad of yeomen, and, after a desperate resistance, was captured and lodged in Carrickfergus jail. Thence he was sent in chains to Belfast, where the usual mockery of a trial took place.

McCracken was offered his life on condition that he would divulge the secrets of the organization and in particular declare who the leader of the Ulster insurgents was originally to have been. His indignant reply was: "How can you expect me to be such a villain?"

His aged father was asked to use his influence with him in this regard, but he proved incorruptible, for he said: "I would rather my son should die than act dishonorably."

The end of the tragic drama came soon. On July 17, 1798, Henry Joy McCracken emerged from Belfast jail. His sister was in waiting, and after embracing the two walked to the scaffold lovingly hand in hand. Indeed, it was only by the imperative orders of Gen. Nugent that she was prevented from mounting the scaffold with him. The ghastly procession stopped opposite the market place which is situated in High street, Belfast. With cruel irony the gallows had been erected on a site which was a free gift of his grandfather's to the inhabitants of Belfast. He was not suffered to address the weeping multitude who surrounded him. He had scarcely given a farewell wave of his hand when the executioner seized him, and in the course of a quarter of an hour, after barbarously hacking and mutilating his helpless remains, England's minions had taken their final vengeance upon him.

He died in the prime of life, a gallant, clever and accomplished gentleman—a dutiful son, a loving brother, an unswerving friend, and above all an incorruptible and dauntless patriot. In the scrolls of history no nobler name appears than that of Henry Joy McCracken, the leader of the Antrim United Irishmen.

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## TRIBUTE TO AN IRISH SOLDIER.

Speech of George Washington's Stepson  
Delivered in Washington City  
In the Year 1832.

"John Byrne, the Irish soldier of the Revolution."—George Washington P. Custis, the grandson of Lady Washington, and the adopted son of the "Father of His Country," in a speech delivered at Washington on the 6th of August, 1832, when speaking of the Irish soldiers in the Revolution, told the following anecdote: "The recollections of America's days of trial must the more and more endear to her the memory of the Irishmen's services in 'the times that tried men's souls.' Perhaps I may tire you with 'a thrice-told tale,' yet, if the Americans were as much instructed in the history of their own times as they are in the records of antiquity, they would find as brilliant instances of courage and patriotism to admire in the lives and actions of the heroes of the Revolution as those who flourished in the days of Rome and Greece. Do the mellowed recollections of antiquity contain a finer instance of courage and fidelity under the severest pressure of misfortune than is found in the story of poor John Byrne, the Irish soldier of the Revolution? Years have passed away since an aged and broken man came to my door and saluted me with, 'God bless you; I am one of Washington's old soldiers, and I have come to see you.' I am proud to tell you that I often received a call from the honored remnants of the Revolution. They say that they can not pass my domicile without calling upon one they are pleased to term a member of the old family. And so hear me God! more welcome to my house and my heart are these gray and withered relics of the heroic time than would be the presence of an emperor. Byrne was one of the finest types of that order of beings now almost extinct, that ever met my notice. Never can I forget the touching scene that ensued when I had ordered a cup to cheer the old man's heart; the sublime expression of his features, when having drunk to my health he reverently turned his eyes toward higher and better worlds, and exclaimed: 'Here's to the memory of General Washington, who is in heaven.' 'Twas a head such as Guido might have painted, over which seventy winters had shed their snows, while tears of veneration, at the remembrance of a loved commander, coursed each other down the channels which time and hard service had worn full many and deep. The sufferings which Byrne endured were even a refinement upon the hellish usages of the prison ship. For this preference he was entirely indebted to his brogue, which betrayed his being a native of the Emerald Isle; and then, as he emphatically observed, they added their tortures as a civility due to my native country. Oh! ye 'who jest at scars that never felt a wound,' picture to yourself a being, captive and desolate, knawed by famine, breathing the air of pestilence, associated only with the dying and the dead. But see, there appears the commander, like an angel of mercy, having healing under his wings, having pardon, protection, food, raiment, gold. But mark ye the price of all these benefits. 'Twas like the devil tempting the Son of Man of old. 'All these will I give you, but you must abandon the cause of American liberty,' said the English Admiral to Byrne, when the latter had crawled upon the deck and confronted the arbiter of his fate. And what was the suffering hero's reply? Hear it, Americans; treasure it in your hearts, aye, and write in your books that future ages may read it and admire the cry of brave Byrne in the prison ship at Charleston and amid the ranks of death at Eutaw—'Hurrah for America!' Turn over the pages of the past, dive into the depths of centuries, and you can find no more brilliant example of courage in the midst of despair, of zeal and fidelity to the cause of human liberty, than is shown in the story of John Byrne, the Irish soldier of the Revolution."

Fever closely resembling the famine fever of '48 is scourging the starved peasantry of Kerry.



William Jennings Bryan as Colonel of Volunteers.

gents possessed no cavalry. The sight of a fleeing enemy renewed their courage, and their commander passed along their ranks, assuring them that reinforcements were on the way. In confirmation of his words a large body of redcoats from the garrisons of Belfast and Blanis Moore were observed hurrying up. A junction was soon effected, and after a brief breathing spell it was determined that they should retrace their steps and endeavor to recover their lost position.

It is often easier to enforce discipline in moments of danger than in those of fancied security. So it proved with the Ulster insurgents. While engaged in attacking Antrim they had obeyed their leaders instantaneously and with an utter disregard of peril, but now that the victory was apparently won McCracken found it beyond his power to keep them under control. They had gained the town after a long and weary march and after desperate fighting, in which many a gallant comrade was laid low. The enemy was flying like redshanks toward the north, and by this time were not less than a score of miles away. Surely it was time to wipe off the blood and dust of battle, refresh themselves and rest their weary limbs. Accordingly they put aside their arms and gave themselves up to rest and enjoyment. Glasses were clinked, "The Rapparees," "The Wild Geese" and "Sarsfield's Rovers" were enthusiastically toasted, and songs of liberty rang in the startled ears of terror-stricken Antrim loyalists.

Precisely at the moment when the

whelming odds and repeatedly repulsed their assailants.

As evidence of the gallantry and chivalry which animated these men, one incident deserves to be recorded in letters of gold. On one occasion a company of regular troops, mistaking their direction amidst the smoke of battle, got mixed up with Hope's division, and suddenly found themselves surrounded. It was the easiest matter in the world to cut them off to a man, but Hope scorned to take advantage of their mistake. Advancing to the officer who had led the redcoats, he told him to go back as he had come—that the United Irishmen felt no pride in destroying the weak and defenseless. So without a hair of their heads being touched, the little troop of military retreated to their own lines. If Hope's opponents had fought in the same spirit of chivalry what a different tale might have been told. But the insurgents received no quarter. Unarmed as they were they were cut down mercilessly as they fled towards Randalstown and Shone's Castle. Hope's little band, after sustaining many desperate cavalry charges, at last fell back upon Duneag Hill, where McCracken had taken up his position, accompanied by a few faithful adherents.

Here out of all the thousands who had advanced upon Antrim only about a hundred were now mustered. The battle of Antrim had been won and lost—won by means of pure valor in the teeth of military prowess and discipline; lost through fatal self-